

R 050835Z FEB 09
FM AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7613
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMCONSUL CHENGDU
AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
NSC WASHINGTON DC
AMCONSUL SHENYANG
AIT TAIPEI 1522
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL SHANGHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SHANGHAI 000067

STATE FOR EAP/CM, INR AND DRL
NSC FOR LOI, KUCHTA-HELBLING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/5/2034

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [CH](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: (C) HANGZHOU ACTIVISTS ON "08 CHARTER" AND EAST CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

REF: A. (A) 08 SHANGHAI 523
[1](#)B. (B) 08 SHANGHAI 547
[1](#)C. (C) 08 SHANGHAI 542
[1](#)D. (D) SHANGHAI 66
[1](#)E. (E) EUP20090111950019
[1](#)F. (F) OATES 1/14/09 EMAIL
[1](#)G. (G) SHANGHAI 27 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: CHRISTOPHER BEEDE, POL/ECON SECTION CHIEF, US
CONSULATE SHANGHAI, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Four Hangzhou-based signatories of the 08 Charter told Poloff on February 4 that the document's impact has not been as significant as was originally hoped, but the charter's support is greater than the number of signatories (Refs A, B, and C). The contacts also shared their views on three current East China human rights cases -- Wang Rongqing, Zhang Jianhong (aka Li Hong), and Jia Xiaoyin. End Summary.

(C) Following Up With Four 08 Charter Signatories

[1](#)2. (C) Poloff had lunch in Hangzhou on February 4 with three 08 Charter signatories: Independent PEN writer Wen Kejian, who was one of the organizers of the 08 Charter and was briefly detained for his involvement (Ref C), Independent PEN writer Zan Aizong, and Zhejiang University law professor Zhuang Daohe. Poloff met separately on February 4 with Ye Hang, another 08 Charter signatory who is an economics professor at Zhejiang University. (See Ref D on their views on social stability in Zhejiang Province.) The 08 Charter, a manifesto that calls for sweeping political reforms in China, originally was signed by 303 leading intellectuals and activists and was posted on the internet on December 9, 2008, to coincide with UN Human Rights Day on December 10.

(C) 08 Charter's Impact

[1](#)3. (C) All four contacts said the 08 Charter's impact has not been as significant as was originally hoped. According to Wen Kejian, predicting the final outcome of the charter is difficult, but the document still has not spawned a large-scale movement. The 08 Charter achieved the objective of attracting the Central Government's attention, Wen said, and it has been followed closely by academics who track political issues, but most average Chinese citizens still do not know about it. Ye concurred, stating that the 08 Charter's "base of support" still is not big enough, as people remain more concerned with their own livelihoods and incomes than with political rights. Wen insisted, however, that the 08 Charter's support is greater than the number of signatories (which he estimated has now reached

8,000), as many Chinese activists support the principles of the charter but for a variety of reasons have not yet signed it themselves.

(C) Wang Rongqing

¶4. (C) Wen Kejian said he was saddened by a Hangzhou Court's six-year prison sentence in early January of Wang Rongqing, an activist who has played a role in China's democracy movement for the past 30 years, including participating in the Democracy Wall movement of 1978 and Tiananmen Square demonstration in 1989 (Ref E). The court sentenced Wang for subverting state authority after he organized a meeting prior to the Olympics of the China Democracy Party (CDP), which was outlawed by authorities in ¶2002.

¶5. (C) Wen said the 67-year-old Wang suffers from high blood pressure and likely would not survive a six-year sentence. According to Wen, Zhejiang activists greatly admire Wang, but Wen believes Wang and Xie Changfa, a Hunan-based activist, made a critical error by holding a CDP meeting prior to the Olympics -- giving the authorities no choice but to arrest them. As a result, other Zhejiang activists do not believe Wang's sentencing is representative of a trend, but is a single case of one activist pushing the envelope on a hot-button issue, Wen said.

(C) Zhang Jianhong (aka Li Hong)

¶6. (C) According to our contacts, Zhejiang activists are concerned about Zhang Jianhong (aka Li Hong), a native of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, who was sentenced in March 2007 to six years in prison for writing articles "defaming the Chinese Government and calling for agitation to overthrow the government" (Ref F). Wen said it is well known that Zhang, who suffers from muscular dystrophy, also is in poor health. Zan Aizong told Poloff he recently spoke with Zhang's wife, who is very concerned about Zhang's deteriorating health. (Note: Zan also offered to pass messages to Zhang's wife on Poloff's behalf if necessary. End Note.)

(C) Jia Xiaoyin

¶7. (C) On a positive note, our contacts were pleased that Suzhou blogger Jia Xiaoyin was released by Shanghai police in January after prosecutors decided not to charge Jia with libel for "spreading rumors" following Yang Jia's high-profile murders of six Shanghai police officers in July 2008 (Ref G). Jia had written in his blog that the officers deserved to be killed after they tortured Yang Jia. Zan spoke with Jia Xiaoyin following his release, and said the 23-year-old netizen was badly shaken by his six-month stint in prison. Zan surmised that Jia may have adopted a more strident anti-government attitude during his time in jail.

¶8. (C) Our contacts could not agree why Jia was released. Wen, Zan, and Zhuang all said Shanghai police believed Jia "learned his lesson" from his imprisonment. Zan added that police were afraid in July that Jia's blog could inflame public opinion about the Yang Jia killings, but interest in the case has waned in the intervening six months. Our contacts did not agree, however, on whether Jia might have been released because of the lack of a legal basis for charging libel in this particular case. As constant critics of China's lack of rule of law, our contacts said, it would not make sense to argue that Jia was released for legal reasons. Zan shared another theory that police may have released Jia because of concerns that a conviction would lead to protests and social instability. The Jia Xiaoyin case and the Yang Jia murder case are "confusing," Wen said. "On the one hand, the people are afraid of the government, but on the other hand, the government is also afraid of the people."